



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**  
Jacksonville District

# News Release

Release No. 06-34  
For Release: June 29, 2006  
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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

## **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers breaks ground on Lake Okeechobee Aquifer Storage and Recovery pilot project**

Jacksonville, Fla. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) hosted a ceremony today as ground was broken to begin the Lake Okeechobee Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) pilot, a Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) project.

“Today’s celebration marks a significant milestone along our journey to help restore the Everglades,” said Dennis Duke, the Corps’ Chief, Restoration Program Division and program manager for ecosystem restoration. “This pilot project is vital in determining the feasibility of using this technology to achieve successful ecosystem restoration.”

Peter Kwiatkowski, Director, Resource Evaluation and Subregional Modeling Division for SFWMD said that he is looking forward to construction of the project and the information it will provide for future decision-making. He stated that the National Academy of Sciences had reviewed the scope of work for the ASR regional study and the pilot project, and had not only accepted but applauded the efforts it represented.

ASR will store large quantities of fresh water, up to five million gallons per day, where it can be treated to meet federal and state water standards, and later used to

meet ecological and other water resource needs. The pilot phase will be constructed at two locations adjacent to Lake Okeechobee – along the Kissimmee River, near its outlet to Lake Okeechobee in Okeechobee County, and by the St. Lucie canal near the Port Mayaca lock in Martin County. It will be completed over a six year period and will cost an estimated \$19 million.

ASR technology has been used in Florida since the early 1980s, to maintain adequate supplies of drinking water. CERP proposes to use up to 333 ASR wells to store at total of as much as 1.6 billion gallons of fresh water per day to ensure water for the Everglades, to improve conditions in Lake Okeechobee and to prevent damaging releases of fresh water to coastal estuaries. Water that is pumped into the aquifer displaces the slightly salty aquifer water, and the stored water is recovered via pumping for later beneficial use. The pilot project is necessary to identify the optimum configuration for the storage wells and will help to determine water quantity and quality characteristics.

“There are only so many options,” said Duke. “We’re doing everything we can in the short term and planning even more for the long term to save Lake Okeechobee because we know it’s the heart of the Everglades ecosystem.”

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